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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: PERSONAL FEUD DELAYS DE-BA'ATH IN COR

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: The Council of Ministers passed a copy of the "Leaders' Draft" de-Ba'athification law to the Council of Representatives on November 14th. A meeting the same day between COR Speaker Mahmoud al-Mashhadani and Deputy Speaker Shaykh Khalid al-Attiyah degenerated into a shouting match and resulted in the first reading of the draft law being postponed. Attiyah believes opponents of the law want to derail any governmental progress while Mashhadani's staff say he supports the draft but opposes procedural violations committed by Attiyah. Despite the dramatic clash, there appears to be support for the leaders' draft and several sources say the first reading of the law may occur as early as November 17th. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) On November 14th the Council of Ministers, responding to pressure from the PM's office, passed a copy of the "Leaders' Draft" de-Ba'athification law to the Council of Representatives. The draft included a cover page dated November 14th with the signatures of 21 ministers from the COM. On the same day Mashhadani and Attiyah held their weekly meeting with the chairs of the COR's permanent committees. By all accounts a discussion on placing the first reading of the draft on the November 15th agenda quickly degenerated into a shouting match between Attiyah and Mashhadani, with both politicians trading personal insults and eventually storming out of the room. Afterwards the COR administration removed the draft law from the agenda.

¶3. (C) Immediately after the aborted meeting a visibly upset Attiyah met with Poloff. Eyes watering and face flushed, he said Mashhadani had accused him of conspiring with the Americans and Maliki administration to improperly push the legislation through the COR. Attiyah said the Sadr Trend and Tawafuq Bloc oppose the legislation not because of any objections to the draft itself, but because they want to derail any legislative progress. "I cannot work with him any longer," Attiyah said of Mashhadani. At the end of the meeting he asked for a meeting with the Ambassador to express his concerns (Note: The Ambassador will meet with Attiyah on November 16th. End Note).

¶4. (C) Mashhadani's son and chief of staff, Abd Al Bassit, said the speaker objected to Attiyah's violations of the COR's internal laws. He explained that Attiyah received the draft and put it on the agenda for November 15th without consulting Mashhadani, a move he compared to the controversial nominations of the ministers of agriculture and health during Mashhadani's absence on October 30th. Bassit added that Mashhadani had no problem with the draft itself, saying it now had been given to the appropriate committees and could have a first reading by November 17th (Note: In a separate meeting held the same day, Tawafuq MP Ala Makki Abd al-Razzaq said Tawafuq supported the "Leaders' Draft" and also predicted a first reading on November 17th. End Note). In a meeting later on November 14 with the Ambassador, Vice President Adel Abdel Mehdi crowed about Maliki's success in moving the Leaders' Draft through the Council of Ministers

and to the COR. The Ambassador urged Adel that he and the other top GOI leaders to maintain momentum by working with their respective party COR bloc leaders to ensure COR ratification.

15. (C) COMMENT: Atmospherics aside, the "Leaders' Draft" appears to enjoy support among most political bloc leaders and MPs. If this support holds, the dispute may only represent a temporary delay in progress of the draft through the COR. Despite claims to the contrary, Attiyah and Mashhadani's dispute is more personal than professional and only the latest in a series of public feuds between the two leaders. It illustrates the potential of personal animosities combining with the institutional weaknesses of Iraq's legislative process to further delay political progress. END COMMENT.  
CROCKER